

1 Sep 2004

## Rocky Horror Show

### NEARLY NAKED THEATER'S OUTRAGEOUS "ROCKY HORROR SHOW" IS SPLENDID

#### "THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW"

Nearly Naked Theatre, Little Theatre, Phoenix Theatre  
Phoenix, AZ



"The Rocky Horror Show" is as outrageous on stage as it is in the cult flick. That's proved splendidly in Nearly Naked Theatre's spirited production.

Admittedly, I'm a "Rocky Horror Show" junkie. I first saw the spoof of movie science fiction thrillers at a Hollywood cabaret theater in 1974. I sat next to the runway that introduced the screaming transvestite, Dr. Frank-N-Furter, in his clingy black leather girdle, stiletto heels, and fishnet stockings singing the jiving "Sweet Transvestite." The later movie version expanded its fans to those who love to participate in midnight showings.

Few theater troupes tackle the stage version anymore. Afraid less of the adult humor, they worry that audiences will behave like moviegoers and distract actors. But these worries never daunted Nearly Naked Theatre. While it's different and less elaborate, this production is still a hoot and several opening night theatergoers happily joined the stage mayhem. Although the production was rough, it will sharpen as actors become more comfortable with their roles and sound problems are resolved.

Tim Shaver's energetic staging occasionally drags between scenes and Darcy Rould's choreography challenges the cast who often stumble especially the men wearing heels. But the leads are quite good and everyone has lots of fun.

It takes place on a stormy night. Virginal couple, Brad and Janet, gets stopped on a lonely road by a flat tire. They head to a nearby castle where Dr. Frank-N-Furter, an errant scientist from Transsexual, Transylvania, introduces the couple to humanly pleasures and alternative lifestyles. They meet the scientist's creation, Rocky, "a blond man with a tan," who handles Frank-N-Furter's prolific sexual desires. The two innocents discover dark secrets during their wild ride until Frank-N-Furter's motley tribe head home. It's bizarre, non-stop entertainment that carries audiences along in its mockingly peculiar world.

Nearly Naked's artistic director Damon Dering has a ball cavorting in dresses and high heels as he rocks-'n'-rolls his Frank-N-Furter. He sometimes looks more like a fading female impersonator than a swinging transvestite but he's usually on target. Traci McCormick's Janet and Dion Johnson's Brad evolve from sedate conformists hysterically. Slade Hall struggles singing Rocky but he has the necessary looks and moves. Katie Williams-Ivie's stellar voice starts and ends things smashingly with the tone-setting tune "Science Fiction/Double Feature." Only David Weiss' Narrator never takes hold.

At regular performances, audiences are asked to tame participation but anything goes at special late night Saturday shows. "The Rocky Horror Show" continues through September 18 but stay away if campy, sex-laced humor isn't your thing. For tickets, call the Nearly Naked Theatre box office at 602-274-2432.

Grade: B